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ABSTRACT

The paper addresses several issues related to individualizing instruction in physical education and recreation for all exceptional children. The advantages of an objective-based instructional system are discussed, with the I CAN physical education resource materials presented as an example. Underlying assumptions for the usability of an objective-based instructional system for all handicapped are presented. Interest is expressed in the conduct of international studies using an objective-based instructional system in physical education and recreation. (Author)

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"Planning, Implementing and Evaluating Physical Education and Recreation for the Exceptional Child"

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Abstract

This paper addresses several issues related to individualizing instruction in physical education and recreation for all exceptional children. The advantages of an objective-based instructional system are discussed, with the I CAN physical education resource materials presented as an example. Underlying assumptions for the usability of an objective-based instructional system for all handicapped are presented. Interest is expressed in the conduct of international studies using an objective-based instructional system in physical education and recreation.

"Physical Education and Recreation for the Exceptional Child: An Instructional System for Systematic Programming"

Interest in the importance of and approaches toward the physical education, recreation/leisure skill development of the exceptional child has increased dramatically in recent years. With this increased interest has come efforts to develop a research base and a systematic approach for planning, implementing and evaluating instructional programs in a variety of settings.

This paper is designed to: (1) share information about an objective-based instructional system in physical education and recreation known as I CAN[1]; (2) identify underlying assumptions for the usability of an objective-based instructional system for all handicapped, and (3) promote interest in future international studies using an objective-based instructional system in physical education and recreation.

A systematic approach to individualizing instruction in physical education and recreation has two potential advantages: (1) a system is provided which may be adapted for use with all populations, and (2) a compatible system necessary for investigating instructional program and school learning variables of interest internationally is established.

The I CAN Instructional System

The Programmatic Research and Demonstration Project in Physical Education for Mentally Handicapped Children was funded (USOE-BEH) (1971-74; 1975-78) under a grant awarded to Michigan State University[1]. The I CAN individualized instructional system and teaching resource materials developed under this grant were approved for copyright and commercial publication and dissemination in 1976.

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[1]The work mentioned herein as Project I CAN was performed pursuant to a grant from USOE-Bureau of Education for the Handicapped. Title: Programmatic Research Project in Physical Education for the Mentally Retarded. The opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the United States Office of Education, and no official endorsement by the United States Office of Education should be inferred.

The project objectives were to develop, validate and disseminate an individualized instructional management system with physical education and associated skills resource materials. The project period of funding from 1971-74 focused on the primary skills. The project contract funded for 1975-77 had the specific objectives of completing the development, validation and dissemination of the continuing skills, social skills, associated learnings skills and parenting skills.

The I CAN skill content areas for the individualized instruction system are presented in three programs:

1. Primary Skills: Aquatics, Body Management, Fundamental Skills, and Health-Fitness

2. Secondary Skills: Team Sports, Dance and Individual Sports, Outdoor Activities, Backyard/Neighborhood Activities

3. Associated Skills: Minicurricular classroom skills correlated to physical education activity skills through Action Words -- high utility concepts common to both classroom and physical education learning.

Field test and evaluation of materials (19 schools in Michigan) were completed for Primary Skills in 1977 and plans are to complete all programs in 1979. The target population focused on was mentally retarded children ages 5-25 years.

I CAN is an instructional system with accompanying teaching resource materials designed for individualizing instruction for all students, regardless of handicap, the severity of the handicap, or instructional setting. The I CAN system provides a physical education program which is based on selecting performance objectives to operationalize long-term program goals. The student enters the instructional content and sequentially progresses toward achieving desired mastery levels. The teaching competencies for implementing the I CAN system are: planning, assessing, prescribing, teaching and evaluating and are depicted in Figure 1. These competencies are considered essential in order

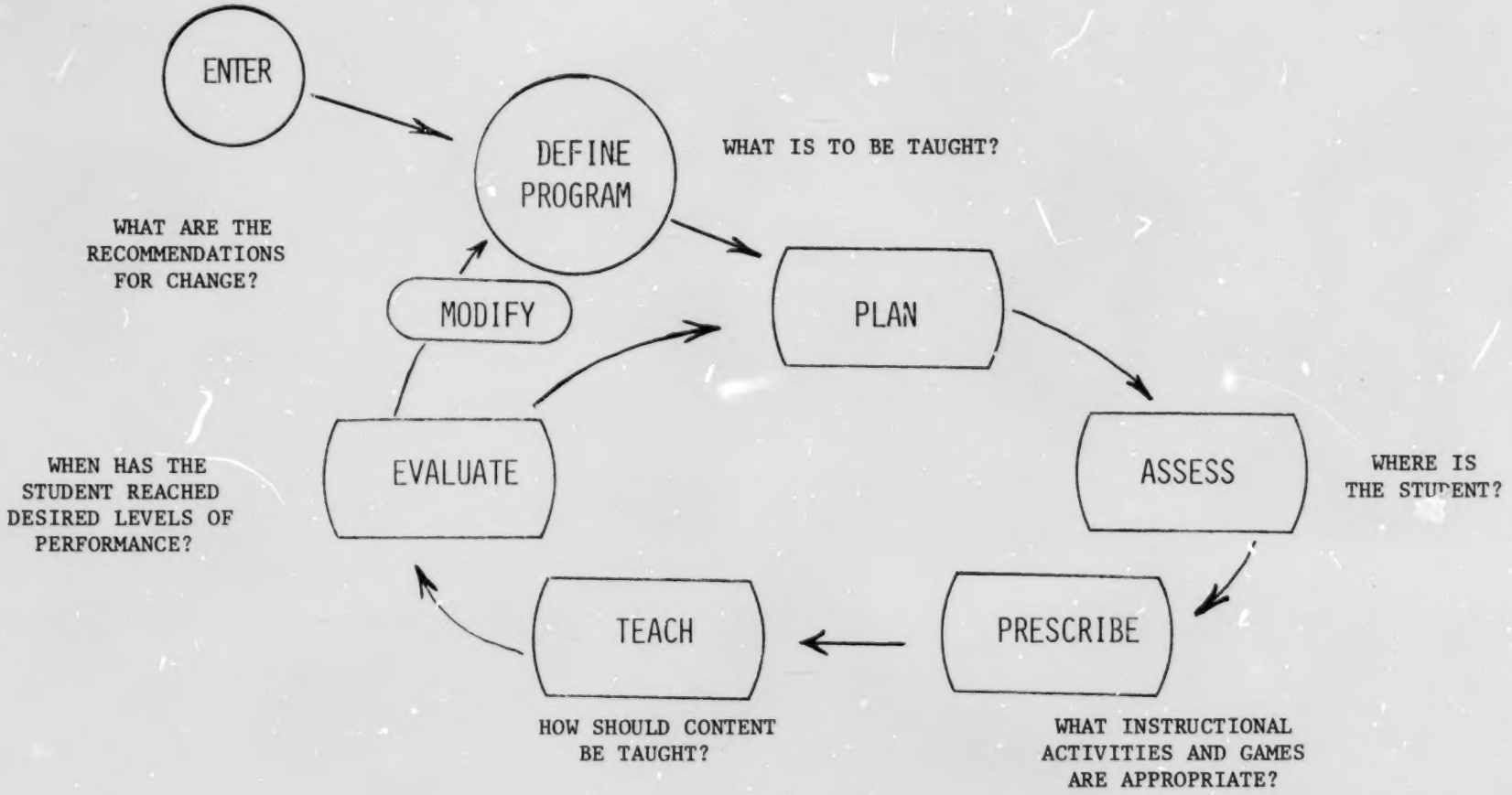

Figure 1. I CAN Teacher Behavior Model with Six Key Questions for Individualizing Instruction.

to individualize instruction using a continuous-progress education program plan based on assessed needs of each student in the class or remedial tutorial setting.

This paper will present several underlying assumption statements and discuss the applicability of I CAN for systematic program planning, implementing and evaluating for all handicapped children and youth.

Assumptions Underlying the I CAN Instructional System

Assumption Statement 1: The common program goals of physical education apply to all students, regardless of handicap, the severity of the handicap or instructional setting.

There is no surer way to keep handicapped children from a fair chance in regular education and quality of life than teaching them something different from what everyone else is being taught. The common goals of physical education programs are for all students. These common goals include the development of fundamental motor skills, functional levels of health-physical fitness competence in socio-leisure skills and cognitive/social skill development for maximizing independent living during maturation and for life adjustment.

Until recently most severely handicapped individuals were placed in institutions with limited physical education opportunities afforded them. They may have been taught some developmentally important motor skills; but for the most part the physical education programs have lacked cohesiveness, direction and a continuum of instructional content. Continued institutionalization was seen as the only future for most severely handicapped individuals. Education was limited and expectations of level of achievement were low. An individualized instructional system provides a framework for developing quality physical education programs for all children, regardless of handicap and/or severity of the handicap. Such a system provides multi-level instructional content. Each

student can enter the instructional content and progress sequentially, proceeding at his own rate toward achieving annual goals and short-term instructional objectives. Systematic instructional programming aids in the maintenance of skill acquisition and generalization of skills which can be transferred to an expanding sport-leisure-recreational instructional content most appropriate for each learner's home-school-community participation.

Assumption Statement 2: There are certain basic skills that all students need in order to function effectively in socio-leisure activities, maintain adequate levels of health and fitness, and function independently in society.

There are basic skill requirements for effective performance in vocational, social and leisure tasks common to all of us. Handicapped children and youth have had fewer opportunities to develop the basic skills, let alone progress beyond a functional level in their lives. Due to a lack of participation in regular physical activity, handicapped individuals demonstrate a higher incidence of problems in the areas of general health-fitness (e.g., endurance, strength, posture and personal hygiene). Basic skills are essential not only for progressing toward independent living, but also for improving the quality of life for all students, e.g., acquiring recreational-leisure skills, providing social development and interaction and developing aesthetic and humanistic appreciation.

Statements relative to the importance of the acquisition of skills for the handicapped in general apply doubly to the severely handicapped. The current goals of deinstitutionalization and development of comprehensive programs for the severely handicapped require a re-examination of long-standing limited expectations for motor skill performance of severely handicapped individuals. Systematic programming and teaching maximizes functional performance potential for each severely handicapped student.

Instructional games provide a system in which children and youth can learn social skills. Undoubtedly one of the crucial outcomes of play is becoming competent in responding to cues, signals and symbols. This can be best done in play. The major difference between play and other modes of social interaction is that behaviors and relationships are prescribed and controlled according to agreed upon rules. Therefore, the student can learn the rules systematically since expectations and relationships are known to all participants.

The most significant aspect of games is the self-imposed rules of play. The rules prescribe the relationship between individuals and/or between groups, the nature of the goals and how the interaction between players may take place. As adults, we participate in the game of living according to certain rules called laws or customs. The play of children is a significant prelude to the functioning competency of adults. Such competency is a product of a child's ability to practice in play the necessary skills s/he will need as s/he grows. The ability of the child to successfully manage the assigned tasks and roles of society is to a significant extent a function of the formal and informal games in which the child has participated. In the game world, all children strive to make themselves competent for life as they interpret it. The severely handicapped will need systematically planned programs in game playing if they are to learn the skills necessary for maximizing independent living in society.

Assumption Statement 3: Most individuals learn motor, communication and social skills in approximately the same developmental sequence. An objective-based instructional system can be developed based upon effective training sequences and known developmental sequences for all children, including the handicapped.

A great deal of effort in education has been directed toward defining the ways in which handicapped learners differ from "normal" learners. It appears

that regardless of the individual differences which exist among any group of learners, learning can be maximized for all students if instruction is approached systematically and teachers attend to on-task time during instruction. I CAN, which is an objective-based instructional system with teaching resource materials, can provide quality programming in physical education for all children. The system attends to doing a thorough job in the basic skills beginning with ages five, and then expanding instructional content so that these basic skills are utilized in a more demanding instructional manner, such as, sports, leisure-recreational activities and the cognitive/social skills essential for maximizing independent living. Systematic instructional programming brings together the best that is known about teaching sequences with developmental instructional motor learning tasks. Together, these two elements provide a system in which instruction and learning and learning proceed in an interlocking manner tracking the performance and the instructional activities for each student.

The crucial difference between teaching normal or mildly handicapped students and severely handicapped students is the degree of precision that is required when presenting instructional content. The severely handicapped cannot progress successfully through unspecified instructional content but can acquire skills if they are carefully analyzed and sequenced. A structured skill sequence can be task analyzed so that smaller discrete steps are identified permitting any learner to enter with success. The I CAN performance objectives have been analyzed and sequenced along a continuum of skill performance. The objectives provide an instructional framework for teachers to systematically plan, implement and evaluate basic skills common to all learners.

Assumption Statement 4: Sequential objectives stated as criterion-referenced measures of performance provide the basic framework for relating

diagnostic assessment to instructional content and planning for each student.

Well-written performance objectives describe precisely what is to be taught and under what conditions the student is expected to perform. Objectives stated in behavioral terms are prerequisite to determining what the student can do and what instructional activities and teaching approaches should be prescribed to enable the student to progress to higher levels of functioning. In an objective-based system a detailed diagnosis of what each child can do and what he needs to learn is performed. Instruction can be directly prescribed toward the content that the student has not mastered. Student assessment data provides a base for instructional planning and insures the efficiency of the instructional program.

An objective-based instructional system directly relates instruction and learning to diagnostic-prescriptive teaching skills. The teaching skills required by an objective-based system include:

1. Planning - The teacher must establish program goals interlocked with sequential performance objectives.
2. Assessing - The teacher must be able to assess students' performance, i.e., entry in a multi-level curriculum which contains goals common to all students.
3. Prescribing - The teacher must devise individualized instructional plans which enable each student to achieve the goals and objectives.
4. Teaching - The teacher must make effective use of learning principles during instruction.
5. Evaluating - The teacher must be able to continuously measure and evaluate students' progress toward mastery of desired goals.

There is significant need for determining what should be part of the instructional program for the severely handicapped and why selected skills should be taught. This need can only be met if students' skills are assessed and the assessment information systematically applied to instruction. In I CAN, students' skills are assessed on the objectives which constitute the instructional program. Assessment and evaluation of student progress through the skill sequences are on-going procedures which enable constant redefinition of the instructional program to meet students' changing needs.

Assumption Statement 5: Sequential performance objectives stated in terms of student behaviors can be adapted to provide for the unique physical education needs of all handicapped.

There is a continuum of skill performance in the I CAN instructional program that applies across all learners. Within each continuum of skill performance, focal points representing criterion can be modified to fit the individual student's needs. In this fashion, a point in the skill sequence can be found where any student can enter with success and progress in small steps toward mastery. Instruction can be tailored to suit the student's rate and style of learning.

There is a need for systematic instructional programming in P.E. which includes and is appropriate for the severely handicapped. The system must provide the teachers with skills necessary to plan, implement and evaluate the instructional program in terms of student outcomes. I CAN provides instructional content described in a continuum of skills which may be further task analyzed if needed. Student performance objectives provide the structured sequential instructional content for task analyses of the discrete skill components or "focal points". The focal points can be further analyzed into smaller sequential components that are functional for the severely handicapped.

The objective-based instructional system provides the structure for teachers to effectively task analyze performance objectives by chaining. In addition, in those instances when the severity of the handicap requires specific adaptations, such adaptations can be described in terms of behaviors that are or most closely resemble the normal qualify aspects of the movement skill.

Assumption Statement 6: The objective-based instructional system provides a tool for planning, implementing and evaluating a comprehensive school program model in individualized programs.

Data-based instructional programming provides a tool for planning, implementing and evaluating a comprehensive program model for individualized programs. Teachers can provide concrete input based on student needs for decision-making, (i.e., referral, placement, individual plan, curriculum plan), evaluating using objective criteria and diagnosing student status. Data-based instruction also facilitates co-planning with the total school program -- teachers have an instructional system and data to work together based on student assessed needs. On-going daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly planning in physical education can be coordinated with all other school instructional content.

The six underlying assumptions of the I CAN system have been presented in order to draw attention to the need for systematically programmed instruction in physical education and recreation for all students, regardless of the handicap, severity of the handicap or instructional setting. In this way, physical education and recreation can contribute maximally toward the improvement of the quality of life during maturation and throughout adulthood for all students.

References

1. I CAN, Northbrook, Illinois, Hubbard Scientific Company, 1976.